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Mr Shane McAteer
Standards & Privileges Committee
Room 254
Parliament Buildings
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4 October 2021

Dear Shane

I can confirm a Senior Crown Counsel reviewed my reports in relation to complaints against both Steve Aiken OBE MLA and Jim Wells MLA, including consideration of all supporting materials.

After reviewing the materials, the QC stated my report was *“an excellent, well-reasoned report”*. Aside from a few typos and syntax relating to a sentence which he recommended I restate more clearly, he had no further suggestions for amendments or otherwise.

In relation to Article 10 in particular, the QC considered that my description of Article 10 was correct, and further stated that Article 10 *“gives leeway for robust expression in the political sphere but it is not absolute and your distinction between public servants being questioned and political opponents debating an issue is legitimate”*. He further went on to state that, *“Ultimately it’s a judgment call on whether questions/ remarks/ gestures remain within the protection of Art 10 or fall on wrong side of line... In my view your assessment is reasoned and reasonable.”*

I hope this is of help to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Melissa McCullough
Northern Ireland Assembly Commissioner for Standards

Private & Confidential



Northern Ireland
Assembly

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

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Dr Melissa McCullough
Commissioner for Standards
Room 283
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30 September 2021

Dear Melissa,

Complaint by Mr Bill Pauley against Steve Aiken OBE MLA

At its meeting on Tuesday, 28 September 2021, the Committee on Standards and Privileges considered the aforementioned complaint and received legal advice on issues arising from the case.

To further inform its deliberations, the Committee agreed that it would write to you to seek clarification on whether you sought your own legal advice on this complaint case.

I should be grateful for your response on this matter by 7 October 2021.

Yours sincerely

Shane McAteer
Committee Clerk